DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 266 649 FL 015 481

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TITLE Puerto Rican Spanish: Opinions.
PUB DATE [86]
NOTE 31p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Dialects; High Schools; High School Students; *Language Attitudes; Language Styles; *Puerto Ricans; Questionnaires; Secondary School Teachers; Social Status; *Spanish; *Stereotypes; *Student Attitudes; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS Spanish (Puerto Rican)

ABSTRACT

Part of a larger study of Puerto Ricans' language attitudes, an investigation of the attitudes of 104 high school teachers and students in Puerto Rico focused on whether the subjects dissented within or among groups on the published cliches or statements that stereotype Puerto Rican Spanish (PRS) as inferior. All but two subjects placed themselves in the middle class, and all had had exposure to other speech styles. Results showed that they generally perceived a speech continuity between PRS and the Spanish used in the rest of the Hispanic world, but they thought that PRS needed improvement, particularly in vocabulary. Although they considered that the language should be improved by some authority, they could not determine the source of that authority. Most subjects also expressed a feeling that there was something wrong with PRS, but they could not pinpoint it or suggest a remedy. Most felt that their own pronunciation was flawed in ways similar to those expressed in the stereotypes. Generally they did not find language to be as important as other factors in their social life, and they thought that the best Spanish was spoken in Spain. No interaction was found within or among groups of students and teachers. (MSE)

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PUERTO RICAN SPANISH: OPINIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a small section of a larger study designed to investigate the attitudes and opinions held by a group of public high school teachers and students on the island of Puerto Rico. The questions in this section of the study focused on comparing the opinions that the 104 subjects held toward their Spanish. Essentially, the focus was on whether the teachers and students who participated in the study dissented within or among groups on the published cliches or statements that stereotype Puerto Rican Spanish as inferior. The results showed no significant difference in opinions among or within groups. (Puerto Rican Spanish, social class, language attitudes, Spanish dialectology, opinions, linguistic variation, sociolinguistics)

0.0 INTRODUCTION

This report constitutes a small section of a major study designed to investigate the attitudes and opinions that Puerto Ricans on the island held toward their vernacular Spanish. The essential distinction between attitudes and opinions is that attitudes are

> predispositions to react to certain persons, objects, situations, ideas, etc. in a particular manner---not always consciously held (as are beliefs) nor readily verbalized (as are opinions). They are characterized as either affective or valuative (Thesaurus of ERIC descriptors 1982).

This paper is then a report of the Ss' consciously held beliefs and their

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verbalized opinions about language issues.

The questions used in the questionnaire for this study derived from a review of the published literature on Puerto Rican Spanish [PRS] (Betancourt 1985). In general, the published literature on PRS tends to stereotype the island's language as inferior to that of the rest of the Hispanic world. Therefore, the essential research question in the study probed the degree to which the subjects (Ss) adhered to the statements and cliches published in the literature on PRS. Conversely, the research questions also probed whether or not the Ss held independent, dissenting opinions from those leveled at their language in the published literature. If the Ss adhered to the statements in the published literature, their language diagnostic usefulness would be limited and they would prove, consequently, to be linguistically insecure. At the same time, the investigator wanted to find out if the two groups of teachers and students differed in their opinions toward their vernacular or if they behaved similarly toward language.

Review of related literature. The concept "opinion" as used in this part of the study refers to the expression of an attitude reported either orally or in writing. An opinion, therefore, represents the verbal expression or symbol of an attitude. Opinions are of interest in this research insofar as they reflect the attitudes toward speech styles that the research intended to measure. Opinions, furthermore, are seen in this study as a means of measuring attitudes. Attitudes, on the other hand, are seen as the Ss' "inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions" about the topic being evaluated (Thurston & Chave 1970:6). In this study, the topic under evaluation is language, as the dependent variable, and social class, as the independent variable. The study focuses, therefor, on the subtle relationship between social class and language in Puerto Rico, whereas other studies on PRS have focused on the

effects of English language contact upon PRS (Betancourt 1985).

The researcher expected to find throughout the study similar social class sentiments and orientation in the Ss', because the Ss in their majority adscribed (94.23%) subjectively to the middle class. Thus, the researcher hyothesized that the study would reveal uniformation in orientation toward middle class values linguistically, educationally, and materially. Therefore, the study's major hypothesis was that both teachers and students would behave equally toward language.

Tumin and Feldman (1961:146) have found that in Puerto Rico "a three-class structure is the preferred view of just over 41% of the lowest class, over 78% of the high school people, and over 68% of the college people." Social classes in Puerto Rico are variously defined by the Puerto Ricans. Tumin and Feldman (1961:143) reported that Puerto Ricans define classes analytically as the groups into which the community is divided, evaluatively as the people who have gotten more of the good things of life, and morally as those who behave decently and have high standards of character.

The social class adscription of the Ss in the present study was evidently evaluatively based. No attempt was made in this research to apply exterior measures of class to find the "true" social class of the Ss. Thus, "social class" in this study must be viewed as the Ss' mental attitude of classness. As Tumin and Feldman (1961:153) state,

> Class, then, for Puerto Ricans, is primarily and dominantly a matter of differences in wealth and standard of living, in comfort and luxury. In a very minor second place comes educational achievement. Virtually nothing else sets classes off from each other.

Muñoz Hernández (1972) adds, as paraphrased by Lewis (1974:458) that the Puerto Ricans "see education for their children not as an intellectually emancipating experience but as a mechanism of social mobility."

This study was limited, therefore, to the interaction of a sample of

middle class Ss interacting among and within themselves and focused on whether the teachers and students were capable of independent judgment on language issues or whether they behaved in accordance with the cliches published about PRS.

1.0 METHODS

1.1 Subjects. The statistical inferences for this report on opinions are based on a parallel sample of 104 public high school teachers and students divided equally into four cells of 26 subjects each, male teachers, female teachers, male students, and female students [henceforth MT, FT, MS, and FS].

Teachers and students were chosen as subjects for the study because all educational materials are directed to the schools and because the centralized educational system of Puerto Rico has traditionally been the main vehicle by which language policies are implemented. The investigator deemed that these Ss would be more representative in their knowledge about language issues than would a more generalized sample from the general public. No attempt was made at a socioeconomic profile of the three high schools because the pilot project revealed that a) the same socioeconomic variables existed in the three high schools and b) all but two respondents in the pilot study placed themselves in the middle class, as did the Ss of the study itself.

The teachers' average teaching experience was 10.4 years (range 1-28) and their average age 29.8 (range 21-50). The students' average age was 15.7 (range 14-19).

In most instances the data are presented in a four-fold division because of the posited hypothesis that for Puerto Rico (as has been confirmed in studies conducted elsewhere) female Ss, due to their linguistic insecurity, will exhibit a more conservative view of language on objective tests about language than will males. Hypothetically, the data for the male Ss will exhibit the typical Hispanic machismo in the form of linguistic bravado. The

term "linguistic bravado" refers to the tendency of the male Ss to be defiant or ostentatious in the expression of opinions.

1.2 Materials and procedures. The opinions questionnarire used in this study consisted of questions that would establish the Ss as language judges, elicit opinions about the relative beauty of languages, probe the Ss' reactions to spoken language, establish the Ss' view of the relationship between language and education, elicit from the Ss the flaws that they perceived PRS to have, and establish whether the Ss believed that languages are static or dynamic and whether they can be improved.

3.0 FINDINGS

3.1 The Ss as judges. The first set of questions discussed below were designed to determine the Ss' degree of exposure to language styles on the island in order to establish the Ss' competence as judges or raters of their own language. The Ss were, therefore, asked about their mobility and their language encounters on the island in order to ascertain the Ss' exposure to styles in bilateral interaction in other parts of the island and the Ss' possible competence as language style raters. The Ss were asked about their mobility within Puerto Rico. Their statements of residence indicated that the higher percentage ($\bar{X}$=67.3%) of the Ss were born and reared on the research site, with no statement of protracted residence elsewhere. However, a larger percentage ($\bar{X}$=75%) of the Ss had visited other parts of the island, with the MTs showing the greater mobility. The two statements on mobility indicated that the Ss were well exposed to the varying speech styles on the island and were possible "educated" raters of local speech styles.

The next question probed the Ss' bilateral speech encounters with other native speakers of Spanish [henceforth Hispanos]. As was expected, given the number of Cubans and Dominicans in residence on the island, the greater percentage of the Ss ($\bar{X}$=95%) had been in face-to-face interaction with other

Hispanos. The Ss were, therefore, considered to have enough language exposure to quality as nonprovincial, educated judges of speech styles.

The next question determined the Ss' exposure to speech styles in situations other than in face-to-face interaction. The Ss were asked, therefore, if they watched television programs made in Puerto Rico or shown on Puerto Rican TV (Table 1). The Ss overwhelmingly indicated that they watched TV ($\bar{X}$=1.6), with the value of 1 occurring with the highest frequency on a scale of 7, where 1 = high and 7 = low. No significant interaction occurred in the Ss' responses.

Table 1. Do you often watch TV?

	MS	FS	MT	FT	TOTAL
ΣX	44	40	35	46	165
$\bar{X}$	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.8	1.6

($F = .69$, $df = 3/100$, $P < .05$)

In general, all four groups watch TV equally. The live media of Puerto Rico, particularly televison, exhibits most of the Hispanic dialects in an array that should provide a basis for interlanguage comparisons. Not only are Puerto Rican speakers heard; other Hispanic visiting performers are also heard, such as moderators and panelists, among others, from the entire Spanish-speaking world. Thus, because of that type of exposure to language styles discussed above, the Ss were expected to have formulated opinions, independently from the literature on PRS, about the language heard on television. Therefore, the Ss were considered "educated" raters of local and nonlocal Spanish speech styles. Only speech styles on the live media were researched because in the pilot project radio proved to be of lower class appeal in <u>cafetines</u> (stores where liquor and staples are sold). Because televison is considered a factor in language change, the Ss were questioned on

the quality of the Spanish they heard on Puerto Rican TV. In answer to that question (Table 2), the Ss praised the quality of the Spanish heard on television ($\bar{X}$=3.9), on a scale of 7.

Table 2. Is TV Spanish the best heard in PR?

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
ΣX	74	95	118	119	406
$\bar{X}$	2.8	3.7	4.5	4.6	3.9

($F = 7.95$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .01$)

However, in the above question, the teachers were more critical of the Spanish heard on TV than were the students. This response to the quality of TV Spanish showed that the sample was drawn from a population of teachers and students who vary in their opinions about the quality of Spanish televison. The above questions established the Ss' exposure to speech styles on the island. They were regarded, therefore, as nonprovincial speech raters.

3.2 Relative Language Beauty. The following questions were designed to elicit the Ss' opinions concerning cliches about the relative beauty of one language dialect over another. The Ss were asked to agree or disagree with the cliche commonly held in Puerto Rico that the best Spanish is spoken in Spain. The Ss concurred (Table 3) with the cliche that the best Spanish is spoken in Spain ($\bar{X}$=3.2, on a scale of 7.

Noticeable in the table is the difference between the male teachers and the rest of the other groups. Compared to the other groups, the male teachers believed that the Spanish of Spain is not the best of the world. However, the male teachers did find it the best of the world; that is, they did not disagree with the other Ss; they just dissented more. This dissention is repeated throughout the study. Dissention of this type is seen in this study as linguistic bravado. This opinion that the language is spoken better

elsewhere is a sign of linguistic insecurity.

Table 3. The best Spanish is spoken in Spain

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
ΣX	77	77	100	78	332
$\bar{X}$	2.96	2.96	3.85	3.0	3.2

($F = 2.89$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .05$)

The Ss were then asked to give their opinion concerning the cliche repeated in the literature on PRS, that PRS is the worst Spanish of the Hispanic World. The Ss totally disagreed (Table 4) with the cliche ($\bar{X}=5.6$), an answer of ethnic pride.

Table 4. PRS is the worst of the Hispanic world

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
ΣX	153	141	160	126	580
$\bar{X}$	5.9	5.4	6.2	4.85	5.6

($F = 2.35$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .05$)

In this question, the Ss showed an ethnic defensive attitude toward their vernacular when they indicated highly (mean of 5.6) that the worst spoken Spanish is not that of Puerto Rico. The female teachers, however, showed their linguistic insecurity in this question. They are closer to agreeing with the cliche than are the other groups.

A third question probed the Ss' opinions about one variety of a language being more beautiful than another (not just "better" as they were asked above). The Ss were asked if PRS was uglier than any other Hispanic dialect (Table 5). Surprisingly, the consensus was located at the neutral point of the scale ($\bar{X}=4.93$), however difficult one may find it to be neutral about anything, particularly about language.

Table 5. PRS is uglier than any other Hispanic dialect

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
ΣX	133	128	123	131	515
$\bar{X}$	5.1	4.9	4.7	5.0	4.93

($F = .31$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .05$)

The table above shows little interaction among or within the Ss in their defense of their vernacular. The high mean of 5 and the neutral mean of 4 seem to indicate that for their language ni tanto ni tan poco ("neither so much nor so little [criticism]"). The Ss' opinions about the relative beauty of one language over another derive, however, from the published literature on PRS.

3.3 Rating spoken language. The questions that follow asked the Ss to judge Spanish usage critically. The Ss were first asked if they admired a public figure (man or woman) for her or his distinctively good command of spoken Spanish and who was, therefore, liked. A second question asked the Ss to identify a public figure (man or woman) who was a substandard user of Spanish and was, therefore, disliked.

The first question received very few answers. The Ss indicated ($\bar{X}$=75%) that they were unaware of such a standard speaker of Spanish who was thereby liked. A similar lack of response bias obtained in the second question. The Ss stated ($\bar{X}$=75%) that they were unaware of a distinctively substandard speaker of Spanish who was thereby disliked--an improbable answer. Factually, the distinctly nonstandard users outnumber the standard speakers on Puerto Rican TV. However, the Ss proved incapable of that linguistic judgment. The Ss in their answers proved that they were very low raters of spoken language. Yet the percentage difference between disliking bad usage (75%) and liking good usage (57%) seems to indicate that the Ss, though low language raters,

have a vague notion of language standards beyond the opinions published in the PRS literature, or those inculcated in the Spanish language courses.

A possible explanation for this lack of response bias concerning good and bad users of Spanish on TV is the Ss' lack of language diagnostic ability at the surface level of language, as indicated from the responses of the Ss who indicated (43%) that there was a universal style of Spanish which they liked, while fewer (25%) indicated that there was a nonuniversal style which they disliked. The lack of response bias may reflect, in sum, the Ss' lack of language diagnostic usefulness. They placed the same public figure tautologically in both the acceptable and unacceptable category. Or, the lack of response bias may reflect political biases toward the establishment. Among the public figures identified by the Ss, three island educators were mentioned in the acceptable speech category. Two public figures from the the study site appeared in the acceptable category. The lengthy tape recording of public figures, which preceded the study showed, however, that the two figures were users of stigmatized language forms. In the students' answers, one public figure, a user of the universal forms of Spanish, appeared three times in the acceptable category. While Puerto Rican TV abounds in TV "jibaros" (both male and female), one of these jibaros was mentioned once, in the stigmatized category, despite the fact that the jibaro (the island's white mountaineer) is typically marked on the island as a nonstandard user of Spanish.

In examining the speech styles of public figures against three years of tape recordings of their public appearances, the researcher found that the speech of the public figures recorded exhibited consistently the stigmatized, nonuniversal features that the Ss themselves had identified as flaws in PRS.

The above questions indicated that the Ss were very low language raters and that both teachers and students lacked any degree of language diagnostic usefulness. Because in language matters in Puerto Rico <u>siempre habla quien</u>

menos puede ("the lower authority proposes"), the investigator expected the participants to stigmatize public figures for their use of nonstandard forms. Labov et al. (1968: Ch 6) has suggested that

> Speakers who use the highest degree of a stigmatized feature in their own natural speech show the greatest tendency to stigmatize others for their use of this form.

While the above questions asked the Ss to rate the speech of others, the following questions asked the Ss to rate their own use of language comparatively.

3.4 Perception of Speech Variation. The Ss were asked to compare their own speech with other speech varieties. Language variability is important in this study insofar as it proves whether the Ss perceived their language as becoming monostylistic as reported in the literature on PRS, or whether they perceived distinctive variability in the language and disprove the reported statements about PRS. The perception of language variation or language styles indicates the Ss' awareness of the life of language. Because of the question of variability, the Ss were first asked if they had noticed any style of Spanish which differed from theirs in their communities. The Ss indicated that they were aware of such variation ($\bar{x}$=62%). They were also asked if they had perceived differences of speech styles in other parts of the island where they had lived or visited. They stated that they had perceived such differences but that they had no difficulty in understanding the Spanish of those areas nor in being understood ($\bar{x}$=99, n=78).

The answer to the above question on style variation and mutual intelligibility on the island indicated that the Ss perceived the existence of language variation on the island as well as in their communities. This mutual intelligibility or linguistic uniformation reported by the Ss was perceived in 1927 by Navarro and documented, from the responses of his illiterate Ss. The implication here is not that Navarro's illiterate Ss and the literate ones of

this research objectively perceive language equally. What is meant rather is that the question in this research was not worded (or could not be) clearly enough to elicit awareness of individual differences in style: the low percentage (62%) of perceived variation may indicate that the Ss interpreted style variation to mean language differences that interfere with understanding. Given that the Ss of this study are naive raters of language matters, the explanation seems plausible.

Another question elicited from the Ss a statement of their perception of the continuity or discontinuity of PRS with the rest of the Hispanic world, that is, that PRS was not diglossic. The Ss stated that they had no difficulty in understanding the Spanish of other Hispanos or in being understood (79%). However, although the above question established that the Ss did not find PRS to be diglossic with the rest of the Hispanic world, another question elicited from the Ss a statement on the sources of language variation in Puerto Rico. The Ss were asked if the whites and the negroes of Puerto Rico could be differentiated by their speech. The Ss concurred ($\bar{X}$=71%) that the whites and the blacks spoke indistinctively, with the MTs dissenting more than the three other groups of Ss. The percentage of positive answers are given in Table 6.

Table 6. No difference between the speech of white and negro Puerto Ricans

MS	FS	MT	FT	$\bar{X}$ %
85	69	58	72	71

In the post-test interview with some of the Ss, a number of respondents stated that they had never thought of the question. Thus, the question was unnecessary because it brought into focus considerations that the social group does not entertain in daily life. The conclusion is, therefore, that any

variance of speech styles in Puerto Rico is not embedded in racial distinctions but rather in such social variables as education, gender, or socioeconomic status.

3.5 Language and Education. In view of the reports, cited earlier (Review of the related literature), on the relative position of education in the new Puerto Rican middle class, the investigator wanted to probe the Ss' opinions on the place of language in education (Table 17a and b).

Summary Table 7a. The well-educated speak better than the uneducated

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
ΣX	79	94	78	96	347
$\bar{X}$	3.0	3.6	3.0	3.7	3.3

(F =.75, df -3/100, p <.05)

Table 7 b. The old speak better than the young

ΣX	112	127	132	115	486
$\bar{X}$	4.3	4.9	5.1	4.4	4.7

(F =.87, df =3/100, p< .05)

The researcher asked the Ss two questions: (a) what were their views on the relationship between language use and educational level? and (b) do the old in Puerto Rico speak better than the young? In the first question the Ss were asked to agree or disagree with the cliche that maintains that the well-educated person speaks better than the uneducated one. The Ss indicated that they perceived a relationship between educational level and language use ($\bar{X}$=3.3). Interestingly, a mean of 3 from all groups, when 4 would be neutral, showed an ambiguous opinion in the Ss' answers.

In the second question (Table 7b above) on the relationship between

speech and age, the Ss were neutral in their answers ($\bar{X}$=4.4), with the MTs decidely dissenting from the others, maintaining that the old spoke worse than the young ($\bar{X}$=5.1). The answers to the two questions are reported together because in modern Puerto Rico the old are mostly illiterate. On the other hand, the children of the jibaro and of the uneducated are now attending schools or have already entered a profession--which may be the case with the Ss of the present study --and become members of the new middle class. Any answer on either side of the scale (either side of the arithmetic mean of 4) would have established an odious comparison between parents and children. Because of the recent rise of the educational level in Puerto Rico, the question was adequately answered. Therefore, the younger generation should not expect the older generation to speak better than the young or better than the educated. If the old spoke better than the young, then the language must have changed pejoratively.

These two questions revealed a degree of incongruity in the Ss' minds. In these two questions, the Ss responded on all seven points of the scale. In the entire study, only these two questions prompted such a scattered range of responses. This incongruity of responses, when in other questions the answers tended to cluster, was indicative of an opinion imbalance in the minds of the raters. The congruity/incongruity principle (Osgood & Tannenbaum 1955) can be perceived as synonymous with balance/inbalance. The mind is in balance (congruity) if a) an associative bond exists between two objects of the same scale and b) if a disassociative bond exists between two objects of the same scale position. Under the two conditions above, no attitude change will take place and the attitude objects will remain at the same scale position. Under all other conditions, the mind is in a state of incongruity and attitude changes can be produced. That is, the attitude objects will change their position in the scales. Thus, at the time of testing, the Ss' answers to the

two questions above were a result of incongruity in the Ss' minds. At a later time, their opinions may change and the Ss' answers may tend to cluster around a point on the scale.

3.6 Dynamicity of PRS. With few dissenting writers, (i.e. del Rosario 1969, 1971; Lloréns 1971, Pérez Sala 1973, Milán 1974, Betancourt, F. 1976, Betancourt, M. 1978, and Pérez Gillespie 1980), the literature on PRS shows a consensus on the language being dynamic though changing for the worse.

From the perspective of language curriculum and sociolinguists, the greater research interest should focus on probing the Ss' awareness of language as being either static or dynamic and, in addition, probing the Ss' reactions toward an attempt to influence the course and direction of language development.

In the first question for this section on the dynamicity of language, the Ss were directly asked if languages changed or remained static. With a high percentage of consensus ($\bar{X}$=92.3%), the Ss concurred that languages are dynamic and that PRS is, as well, a changing, dynamic language ($\bar{X}$=89%). The Ss' answers were probed further by asking them if the Spanish of Puerto Rico had improved, remained the same, or had deteriorated. The Ss concurred (Table 8) that the language had undergone a pejorative change; therefore, "the old speak better than the young."

The published literature on PRS often states that the Spanish of Puerto Rico is archaic (an infelicitous term for a living language) because it has retained a number of early Spanish metaplasms. The Ss were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the archaism cliche. The Ss were unanimous (Table 9), though in the neutral range of the scale ($\bar{X}$=4.96), in responding that PRS was new rather than "archaic". The reason why the Ss were neutral in their response is not immediately transparent, considering that the newness of PRS has been abundantly publicized under the label of Spanglish or as "the results

of language contact."

Table 8. PRS has deteriorated

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total	Percent
Yes	16	20	16	14	66	63.5
No	10	6	10	12	38	36.5
Total	26	26	26	26	104	100.0

Most of the language tokens presented in the PRS literature as evidence of the "descent" of PRS are presented as area-specific to Puerto Rico though they do in fact appear elsewhere in the Hispanic world. However, PRS has incorporated proportionally more borrowed technical terms than other Hispanic dialects have because of the island's industrialization and technological advances.

Table 9. PRS is achaic

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
$\leq X$	132	118	129	137	516
$\bar{X}$	5.2	4.5	4.96	5.3	4.99

($F = 1.11$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .05$)

The answers to the questions above indicated that the Ss perceived PRS as being dynamic, though pejoratively oriented. Because the "deterioration" of PRS is a cliche in the literature, the Ss were asked what the actual fallas ("flaws") of PRS were--if these flaws existed.

3.7 Cruciality of Language Levels. For this section of the study, the Ss were given a list of language-level categories (phonology, lexicon, intonation, and grammar) in order to determine a) what the major flaws of PRS were, and b) at what level of language structure did the Ss find misunderstanding to occur when talking to other Hispanos. Table 10 summarizes the findings on the two questions.

Table 10. Cruciality of linguistic levels

	Level	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total	Rank
A. PRS Flaws	P	8.9	9.4	7.7	10.2	36.2	1
	V	6.4	7.7	8.9	8.1	31.0	2
	G	4.7	0.4	6.0	6.9	18.0	3
	I	2.6	2.6	0.8	2.1	8.1	4
	Others	1.7	0.8	2.1	2.1	6.7	5
	Total	24.3	20.9	25.5	29.4	100.0	
	(χ^2= 1.48, df = 3, p < .05)						
B. Misunderstand other Hispanos (n=24)	V	10.2	11.9	15.3	10.2	47.6	1
	I	5.1	1.7	10.2	6.7	23.7	2
	P	6.7	8.5	5.1	3.3	23.6	3
	G	1.7	1.7	0.0	1.7	5.1	4
	Total	23.7	23.8	30.6	21.9	100.0	
	(χ^2 = 1.8, df = 3, p< .05)						

Legend: P= Pronunciation V= Vocabulary
G= Grammar I= Intonation

The first question asked the Ss to rank the linguistic levels in order of the seriousness of their flaws. The Ss were also asked to give examples of each flaw. In general, the male teachers stated the greater number of flaws and the female students the least.

As shown in Table 10 above, the flaws cited by the Ss were pronuciation (phonology), vocabulary (lexicon), grammar, and intonation, in that order. In the "other" category, the Ss cited flaws which they could have listed under lexicon. In their lack of linguistic diagnostic accuracy, the Ss included in the "others" category Anglicisms and local linguistic variations as flaws, rather than under phonology or lexicon. In other words, the Ss knew a number of token flaws, most of them often cited in the PRS literature, but were unable to place them under the proper label. Thus, in objective opinions about PRS, the Ss were quoting language cliches as tokens, but not knowing under which label to place each token. The Ss did not show any degree of

diagnostic usefulness, a similar finding to Labov's study of English in New York City (1966:405).

Under the pronunciation (phonology) label, the Ss were expected to produce repeatedly the linguistic variables attributed to PRS in the literature, such as the velarization of n [ŋ], or the neutralization of r and l in certain environments. However, these linguistic variables were not commonly cited. The data of this research were not useful in determining whether these linguistic variables have gained enough social prestige so as not to be noticed or whether the variables have not risen as yet into public consciousness to become cliches or stereotypes unworthy of being mentioned in a questionnaire. This question, of course, needs to be empirically studied in Puerto Rico.

Under the same pronunciation label (phonology), the Ss wrote in a number of the metaplasms of XVI century origin, cited yeísmo and both ceceo and seseo as other flaws of PRS. The Ss cited as flaws of PRS many language features commonly shared by the rest of the Hispanic world. Thus, the Ss revealed that they were evaluating PRS from a reference point of cliches and the written language rather than on the basis of any linguistic sophistication.

Under the label of grammar, the Ss most often cited as flaws the violation of such rules of editing as spelling, punctuation, and specifically the placement of the orthographic accent. This answer stressing editing rules of the written language was expected, given the emphasis placed in the Spanish classroom on spelling, editing in general, and the perfection of the written language code.

Under the flaws of vocabulary (lexicon, the Ss most often cited examples of the use of Anglicisms and the inability to find the mot juste in speech, which they labeled as lexical poverty. Both answers lacked interest because they are often quoted in the PRS literature and repeated in the schools and

the island newspapers.

The second question in this section asked the Ss about the linguistic level at which they met most misunderstanding when in face-to-face interaction with other Hispanos. Given the obtained ranking of PRS flaws, the Ss should have ranked the sources of linguistic misunderstanding in the same order that they ranked the flaws. In answer to the question of the sources of misunderstanding in linguistic interaction with other Hispanos, 23% (n=24) claimed that although they had no difficulty in understanding other Hispanos or in being understood by them, when misunderstanding occurred, it was caused by the linguistic features of lexicon first (47.6%), intonation second (23.7%), and--in a near tie for third place--the pronunciation level (23.6%). The language levels which are a source of misunderstanding were ranked much as they were in the PRS flaws in the previous question. Lexicon, therefore, appeared as the main source of misunderstanding, as hypothesized by the investigator from his classroom observations where a major emphasis is put on the memorization of long decontextualized lists of lexical items. The teaching emphasis in the Spanish language class is thus placed on the acquisition of an extensive vocabulary.

The preceding section established that the Ss were aware of linguistic variation in their communities, although they were uncertain as to what accounted for that variation. In the cruciality of the three recognized language categories (lexicon, phonology, and grammar), the Ss indicated that they tolerated less lexical variation (although it is generally the most tolerated in other languages) than pronunciation (i.e. phonological variation). Intonation is the least tolerated category and grammar variation is the most tolerated by the Puerto Rican Ss. The tolerance range of the social acceptability of these categories in Puerto Rico is beyond this research but should be the object of empirical research on the island.

In summary, the Ss stated that the rank order of the PRS flaws is prounciation, vocabulary, grammar, and intonation, in that order. The next section of the questionnaire probed the Ss' opinions on how language could be normatively improved.

3.8 Language normative prescriptions. The Ss concurred in previous questions that PRS was flawed. The following questions probed if the Ss believed that the flaws could be remedied and if the normal use of language can be normatively influenced or its course of development changed. The Ss were also asked to cite those entities who should be in charge of influencing the development of the language and prescribing normative changes for PRS. The Ss were asked if it were desirable and possible to influence through linguistic prescriptions the normal, everyday use of language (Table 11).

Table 11 : Is it possible and desirable to influence the normal use of language?

		MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
Desirable?	ΣX	63	63	56	76	258
	$\bar{X}$	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.9	2.5
		($F = .86$, $df = 3/100$, $p. < .05$)				
Possible?	ΣX	67	53	42	58	220
	$\bar{X}$	2.6	2.0	1.6	2.2	2.1
		($F = 2.5$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .05$)				

The Ss believed that it was both desirable and possible to influence the normal use of language, without any statistical interaction among or within groups of Ss.

A more pointed question, beyond desirability or fiat, asked if PRS should be bettered and who should be in charge of that betterment. The Ss decidedly agreed that PRS should be bettered (Table 12).

Table 12. Should PRS be bettered?

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
ΣX	48	38	42	58	186
$\bar{X}$	1.8	1.5	1.6	2.2	1.8

($F = 1.35$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .05$)

Though the Ss agreed that PRS should be bettered, they presented no clear-cut idea as to who or what entities were to be charged with bettering Spanish in Puerto Rico (Table 13).

Table 13. Ranking of entities who should be in charge of bettering and preserving Spanish in Puerto Rico

		MS	FS	MT	FT	Total	Rank
Teachers		61	61	47	37	206	
	$\bar{X}$	2.4	2.4	1.8	1.4	1.98	1
Language		61	61	69	65	256	
Specialists	$\bar{X}$	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.5	2.46	2
Government		61	77	62	59	259	
	$\bar{X}$	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.5	3
Parents		82	63	82	81	308	
	$\bar{X}$	3.2	2.4	3.2	3.1	2.96	4

($\chi^2 = 1.4$, $df = 3/100$, $p < .05$)

The teachers ranked themselves first (Table 13) as the entity that should be in charge of preserving and bettering PRS ($\bar{X}$=1.6). The students, however, disavowed ranking the teachers first as the entity that should be in charge of bettering and preserving PRS, ranking them in second place ($\bar{X}$=2.4).

Although the students placed the teachers in second place as to the entity that should be in charge of bettering and preserving PRS, the students in another question claimed, as did the teachers, not to know the goals of

Spanish language education in Puerto Rico for either Spanish (X=82.5%) or English (X=58%). At that high level of goal ignorance, the teachers in the study behave as the students do. Though the teachers indicated that they were ignorant of the language goals on the island, only 19% of them indicated satisfaction with the method of teaching Spanish in Puerto Rico. Evidently, the teachers indicated with their answers a desire for pedagogical and curricular changes. As indicated by one of the Ss in a post-test interview, the Spanish curriculum "was fossilized" in the late 40s, at about the same time as the rise of the middle class.

Upon being asked by what means each of the ranked entities could best help in bettering and preserving the Spanish of Puerto Rico, the Ss most frequently answered with a lack of response bias. All four groups of Ss were unable to indicate how each entity could bring about that avowed improvement. The lack of response bias was much in keeping with the linguistic naivete that the Ss exhibited in earlier questions of the study. The Ss were unable to evaluate PRS with any degree of diagnostic usefulness, as discussed earlier, and being unable to diagnose the language, they were, as well, unable to indicate the means which each entity could use to help in preserving and bettering the Spanish of Puerto Rico. That is, the Ss showed no consensus as to what there was to be improved. For example, the Ss stated that the government should control the substandard usage of Spanish on TV and radio, the most frequent answer from all the Ss. However in an earlier question, the Ss had praised the quality of language on TV, but in another question, they had failed in identifying standard and nonstandard speakers of Spanish on TV. Therefore, the Ss' opinions must be interpreted as another instance of their lack of diagnostic usefulness, particularly when the Ss identified the live media as able to conduct a campaign for the betterment of Spanish in Puerto Rico and suggested that the government should use the media for that purpose.

Aside from the lack of response bias, when asked how the teachers themselves could help, the Ss' second most common answer was that the teachers should teach the Spanish language better, by serving as models of good usage. This answer is consistent with the negative view expressed by the Ss on Spanish language teaching methods. Aside from the teachers' contribution to the improvement of PRS, the Ss stated that the parents' place in the preservation and betterment of PRS was that of overseers, guarding and manipulating the speech of their children. Language specialists, on the other hand, received the larger number of lack of responses. However, the Ss who answered in reference to specialists, most often reported that language specialists should divulge their finding through charlas 'informal chats'. Very likely the teacher who later asked about the difference between a specialist and a language teacher was in fact reporting the confusion of the whole group. Nonetheless, a charla to divulge research findings seems an unlikely means for language amelioration.

In the write-in category of the same question, the Ss placed themselves more often than not as the other entity that should be in charge of preserving and bettering the Spanish language in Puerto Rico, which seemed an answer of linguistic guilt. Of interest in this question is the Ss' opinion that the government is almost as powerful as the linguists are in improving the use of language. Furthermore, while teachers find that language specialists should be in charge, students don't.

The preceding questions probed the Ss' reactions to the normative imposition of language use. The Ss agree with the cliche that language usage can be dictated by law or imposed by fiat. The questions discussed above probed the feasibility and desirability of bettering PRS through normative prescription. The Ss did not arrive at a consensus as to who the entities should be nor the means by which such entities could better the language. The

Ss' answers to these questions were in keeping with their uninformed approach to language issues.

3.9 Social Importance of Language. This section probed the Ss' opinions on the social life of language. They were asked such questions as a) whether people were judged more by their speech than by their intelligence, b) whether language was a factor in academic success, and c) whether language was a factor in getting a good job.

In trying to establish the importance that the Ss attribute to language in social life, the Ss were asked if people were judged more by their speech than by their intelligence, given that language is the first item, aside from clothes and demeanor, that people offer of themselves to be judged by. The students concurred (mode of 1) that one is judged more by one's intelligence than by one's speech (Table 14).

On the same question, the female teachers disagreed with the students (mode of 2). The male teachers, on the other hand, dissented from both groups (mode of 4). In general, however, all groups agreed that one is judged more by one's speech than by one's intelligence ($\bar{X}$=2.7).

Table 14. One is judged more by one's speech than by one's intelligence

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Total
ΣX	76	59	72	70	277
$\bar{X}$	2.9	2.3	2.8	2.7	2.7

(F= .62, df= 3/100, p< .05)

A second question asked the Ss whether speech or other variables such as dress, intelligence, personality, or social class had any influence in academic success or in securing a good job. Table 15 a and b below shows the Ss' responses to both questions.

Table 15 a. Factors in academic success

	MS	FS	MT	FT	Rank
Intelligence	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.3	1
Personality	2.3	1.8	1.7	3.1	2
Speech	2.3	2.4	3.2	2.8	3
Social Class	4.8	5.0	4.0	3.8	4
Dress	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.7	5

(χ^2 = .08, df= 3, p< .05)

Table 15 b. Factors in finding a good job

Personality	2.3	1.8	1.7	1.9	1
Intelligence	2.4	2.4	2.3	3.0	2
Speech	2.7	2.7	2.96	2.3	3
Dress	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.1	4
Social Class	4.0	4.8	4.9	4.8	5

(χ^2 = .2, df= 3, p< .05)

In general, the four groups behaved similarly in their opinion as to the function of the five variables in academic success. The Ss believed that academic success was a function of intelligence ($\bar{X}$=1.6). Speech was ranked clearly in third place ($\bar{X}$=2.7). Personality, on the other hand, ranks second in academic success. However, it is not immediately apparent why the male teachers, though they usually dissented in all questions, found personality to rank in first place for academic success. This answer may prove, in fact, that the new middle class of Puerto Rico, as represented by the Ss of this study, view education materially rather than as an emancipating experience.

While the Ss were in agreement as to the rank of intelligence, dress, and social class, the variables of speech and personality were not clearly ranked by the Ss. Possibly, the Ss perceived a subtle interaction between speech and personality but were unable to evaluate that interaction objectively.

In the second question (Table 15b), the Ss were asked to rank the same

factors of dress, intelligence, speech, personality, and social class in order of their contribution to finding a good job. Personality was ranked first in finding a good job, with intelligence in second place. Social class moved from a rank of 5 to a rank of 4, while manner of dress was of least importance in finding a good job. Both questions answered above, being open ended, received palas 'pull' as the most common write-in answer--not an unusual answer, given the Hispanic personalismo. If the factor of personality had been clarified in the questionnaire to include comportamiento 'public demeanor' and manera de ser 'the way a person is', the mean ratings for personality would probably have been different. Of interest in these two questions is the Ss' opinion that language ranks as a consistent third factor in academic success or in finding a good job, though speakers generally show their speech before their intelligence.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

This study probed the opinions of public high school teachers and students about language in relation to society. All but two of the 104 Ss avowed middle class membership (94.23%). Therefore, the discussion of the findings is limmited to a group of Ss who placed themselves subjectively in a similar social class and must consequently share similar social, educational and linguistic orientations.

The impetus of this study was the stereotype of PRS as an inferior dialects--a stereotype lent credibility by 85 years of published criticism. During those 85 years, Puerto Rico has felt the influence of industrialization and has seen the rise of a middle class, but has failed to update its Spanish language curriculum. The investigator wanted to find out whether a group of teachers and students, self-denominated members of the middle class, reacted according to language stereotypes or whether they could judge language issues and PRS independently.

The Ss in the study proved to have had language contacts other than those in the experimental site and were, therefore, not limited to hearing local speech styles alone. Their exposure to language styles qualified the Ss as judges of speech other than that of the locale. Their opinions, a verbal expression of attitudes toward language, shouldd not, therefore, be interpreted as purely provincial views.

On one hand, the Ss perceived a speech continuity between PRS and the rest of the Hispanic world; they do not find PRS to be diglossic. PRS, the Ss felt, is in need of improvement. They were in agreement that vocabulary is the linguistic level at which the language most needs to be "improved," but they do not know how the other levels of language are "wrong" or how they can be improved. Furthermore, the Ss believe that language can be improved by fiat or decree, but they are unable to state accurately who should be in charge of improving PRS.

On the other hand, they vaguely perceive something "wrong" with their Spanish but are unable to diagnose what that "something" is. They cannot diagnose what is wrong, except when they can cite the published literature on PRS, so they are unable to prescribe measures for the betterment and preservation of their language. In summary, though the Ss expressed a sense of something being wrong with their language, they did not know what was wrong, except from what they could quote from the published literature on PRS. Not being able to diagnose what was wrong with their language, the Ss could not indicate how to proceed to better the language nor who would be able to serve as a language specialist. Because the Ss have only a vague notion of something being "wrong" with their language, they also have only a vague idea for the remediation of their use of language.

The Ss claimed most frequently that the lack of an extensive vocabulary is the major flaw in their Spanish. They also claim that their pronunciation

is flawed. By pronunciation, the Ss mean the use of such variables as the aspiration of s, the r and l alternation, and so on. Most of these variables, however, are not area-specific to Puerto Rico but, rather are typical of other Spanish speakers. In their perception of what is wrong with their speech, the Ss behaved stereotypically, from a basis of linguistic cliches. In instances when the Ss could not answer with a cliche, most chose not to respond. When they did respond, they showed a confused knowledge of linguistic categories. For instance, when they were asked to judge standard and nonstandard speakers, in the absence of a ready-made answer, the Ss chose not to answer.

The Ss perceived PRS to be a dynamic language that is changing for the worse but, because they do not have any useful diagnostic knowledge of language, they do not know what should be improved or who should be in charge of that improvement. The place of language in social life, including education, is in imbalance in the minds of the Ss, as is in imbalance the relationship between age level and language use. They have not, as yet, decided how language functions in their society.

The Ss did not find language very important in social life. In their opinion, such factors as personality and intelligence are more important than language in securing a good position and in academic success. Both students and teachers lack any useful diagnostic knowledge of language issues, a circumstance ensuing from a curriculum which repeats alien and unfriendly statements about PRS. The language behavior of the teachers and students was similar and appeared to be the product of a language curriculum based on assumptions of remediation rather than on the educational needs of the school clientele.

In this study, the researcher wanted to find out if the group of teachers and students differed within and among groups in their opinions toward language. The study disclosed no interaction within or among groups. In

their responses to the questionnaire, the Ss were "too much of one piece." Both groups behave toward language on the basis of the language cliches published in the PRS literature which stereotypes PRS as inferior. Both groups proved to be linguistically insecure. They concurred that the best Spanish is spoken in Spain, with their own language being a deteriorated version of Peninsular Spanish.

The stated hypothesis of the study, that both teachers and students would behave similarly toward language issues, is, therefore, retained.

NOTES

1. The Neorican subgroup was excluded from the study because either of their two languages has been the object of adverse criticism. In the US, their English has been deemed deficient as has their Spanish in Puerto Rico. The Neorican subculture was excluded from the study because their life in two cultures and the comments leveled at their competence in either language would have made their reactions to the questions in the study more conscious or perhaps self-conscious than those opinions of the island Puerto Ricans.
   The term "Neorican" (variously spelled) refers to the children of Puerto Rican immigrants living in the US, whether these children were born in the States or not.

2. The level of significance for both the F and χ^2 tests in this study was set at $p<.05$. By using that level of significance, or cut-off point, the researcher decided a priori that when the results of the empirical data occurred by chance five percent of the time or lower, the researcher was willing to assert that the results were true or due to nonchance factors.

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